



CRS Parent Connection

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

Volume 16, Number 1



Winter 2008

CRS resource centers add more books

If you're looking for interesting and informative books on disabilities and special health care needs, look no further than your nearest CRS Family Resource Center.

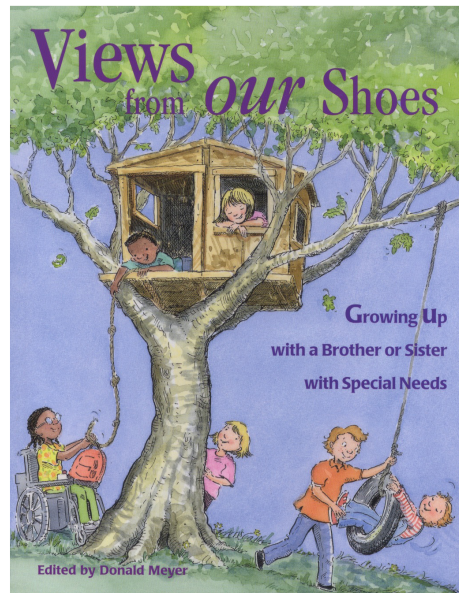
All 12 Family Resource Centers include a variety of materials, such as videos and other publications, as well as books. Each resource center has added more than 20 new titles.

The resource centers are available to families, professionals and anyone in the community. Several of the new titles are children's books and would be an excellent resource for a parent or teacher to use to familiarize a class with a particular disability. The books could also be used by Sunday school teachers or scout leaders who want to increase sensitivity and understanding of disability issues.

"CRS is so pleased to be able to make these materials available to families who visit our clinics, and others in the community," said Susan Colburn, CRS state parent consultant.

The books include topics such as autism, spina bifida, traumatic brain injury, and more.

For more information about the



new books and resources, contact your local CRS office and ask to speak to your local parent consultant.

You can view the books that are available by going to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services website at www.rehab.alabama.gov/crs and clicking "Parent and youth involvement," "Parent Connection" and then "Family Resource Centers."

This *Parent Connection* newsletter will start a series in which a parent consultant will review one of the new books added to the Family Resource Centers. The first book is "Views from Our Shoes."

Be on the lookout for this book to be featured in clinics when you visit CRS.

Book Review:

"Views from Our Shoes"

I thought "Views from Our Shoes" was a wonderful book that gives siblings a voice.

As a parent of a child with special needs, you tend to think about the feelings of the child with the disability the most. However, all children's voices deserve to be heard, and this book gives the other children in the family a voice to share the views.

This book also has a wonderful glossary of the definitions of the diagnoses in language that parents and children can understand. I also love the list of resources it offers to families in need.

The children in this book expressed their likes and dislikes of having a sibling with special needs. It also helps explain their doctor's visits and makes them more comfortable in their offices.

I would recommend this book to any family to use as a tool to get their children to open up and express their concerns, and/or problems that may arise in a house with a child with special needs.

Monica Jackson

Parent Consultant

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Parent Connection is a complimentary newsletter published by Children's Rehabilitation Service for families of children with special health care needs. The goal of this newsletter is to increase communication and share information about children with special health care needs and their families. The newsletter reflects a family-centered theme throughout and serves as a forum for family members to share information, thoughts, feelings, concerns, etc. Nothing printed or implied in this publication constitutes an endorsement by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

This material is available in alternate formats upon request. Alternate formats include braille, large print or audio tape and may be obtained by calling the phone numbers listed above.

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From the Director's Chair



Hello, Parents,

I trust that all of you had a Merry Christmas and that 2008 has gotten off to a great start.

Toward the end of 2007, CRS staff members were busy finalizing plans for new CRS Clinics in Birmingham. We have plans to start three new clinics and to relocate one clinic in early 2008.

The **Newborn Cystic Fibrosis Clinic** will be a follow-up clinic for newborns suspected of having the pulmonary disorder cystic fibrosis. One clinic will be held each week at The Children's Hospital. The location of the clinic has not yet been determined. It is estimated that more than 40 newborns will be identified as testing positive for CF by the end of the year as a result of screening efforts. There may not be an increase in the number of cases identified each year within the state, but there will be a definite increase in early identification of children with CF.

The **Specialty Pediatric Orthopedic Clinic** is a new clinic being developed "to provide specialized pediatric orthopedic care for those children who refer from other CRS clinic orthopedists and have been identified as having risk factors requiring a secondary assessment by a multidisciplinary team for treatment/surgical intervention to prevent or treat deformities and increase function." This clinic will be held in the CRS/TCH Clinic and will be staffed by Dr. Scott Doyle and other talented pediatric orthopedists from The Children's Hospital staff. A specialized training will take place in the very near future for CRS orthopedists who will be making referrals to this clinic.

Another new clinic, **Limb Deficiency Clinic**, will be replacing the CR/VR Amputee Clinic that has been held in the Homewood CRS office. Dr. Joe Gerald, the longtime Amputee Clinic doctor who has provided our CRS and VR clients with many years of service, has retired. Homewood District Supervisor Randy Hebson and Billy Ronilo, physical therapist at CRS Homewood, have been meeting with TCH staff to finalize plans for this clinic to be moved to The Children's Hospital South. This will be the first CRS clinic to be held at this location (off the 459/Acton Road exit). While current Amputee Clinic Standards will remain the same, the new Limb Deficiency Clinic will include Dr. Charlie Law, a physical medicine physician, and pediatric orthopedist Dr. Skip Gilbert to lead the clinic team. Children with limb deficiencies in the Birmingham area as well as from across the state needing more specialized care can be referred to this clinic for comprehensive, centralized medical follow-up and education.

In addition to the above new clinics, the **Juvenile Arthritis Clinic**, which is

(Continued on Page 3)

Spina bifida conference is a great success

The Children's Hospital Spina Bifida Clinic and The Spina Bifida Association of Alabama recently partnered to host "The Successful Teaching of Children with Spina Bifida Conference."

The conference was a huge success. There were approximately 170 attendees from many walks of life, including therapists, teachers, social workers, school and hospital nurses, students, parents, and adults living with spina bifida.

Dr. Jack Fletcher from The SANDI project in Houston, Texas, came as our keynote speaker. He provided the most current information on the learning issues that children with spina bifida have and, more importantly, the recommendations for how to overcome the challenges.

One of the most exciting parts of the day was over lunch, where we had an adult panel discuss what living with spina bifida had been like for them. We had one of the oldest active people with spina bifida on our panel. His name is Bill Whatley, and he is 78 years old.

The Children's Hospital Spina Bifida Clinic and The Spina Bifida Association of Alabama showed they are committed to the mission of The Spina Bifida Association, which is "to enhance the lives of those living with spina bifida and promote prevention."

This conference definitely



Bill Whatley (center), 78, speaks at the spina bifida conference held in The Bradley Lecture Center at The Children's Hospital.

raised awareness. As a result, we are committed to having an annual conference to discuss the issues and secondary conditions relating to spina bifida. Our next conference will be on Sept. 12, 2008. It will also be held at The Children's Hospital. The objective will be managing the spina bifida bowel and bladder and how this affects independence.

If you are interested in purchasing a DVD and/or conference binder from the "Successful Teaching of Children with Spina Bifida Conference," please

contact Betsy DeCesare at 205-939-5281, or betsy.decesare@chsys.org. Also, if you would like additional information about spina bifida or the upcoming conference, you may contact Betsy DeCesare or Trish Switzer at (256) 325-8600 or at al_spina_bifida_support@hotmail.com.

Betsy DeCesare
Spina Bifida Coordinator
The Children's Hospital

(Director's Chair, continued from Page 2)

currently held at the CRS/TCH office, will be moving to the TCH Children's Park Place. District Supervisor Bonita Torrence and Stella Ervin, the CRS/TCH office nurse coordinator, are excited about the relocation of this clinic. Children's Park Place is a new, state-of-the-art facility where most of the testing and evaluation/treatment

of our arthritis patients can be done in a centralized location. Additional space, lab accessibility, and advanced treatment options will be available.

We are excited about the continuation of our partnership in systems building with The Children's Hospital and staff in Birmingham. Our CRS clients and families deserve

the very best of care, and we know that continuing and building on these relationships further contributes to our mission of enabling Alabama's children and young adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

Melinda Davis
Assistant Commissioner

ADRS offices demonstrate holiday spirit

Brian Brooks, a Millbrook parent of a CRS consumer, was already dealing with the medical expenses of taking care of a 6-year-old son with cerebral palsy.

Then his wife had open-heart surgery and he had to quit his job to take care of his wife and his son.

"Things are tough," Brooks said.

He was appreciative when his family was one of nearly 100 families that received bags of Thanksgiving food at the annual food basket event held at the Montgomery CRS office.

The event was arranged by Montgomery's local parent advisory committee and paid for by funds from the Montgomery County Individual and Family Support Council.

Monica Jackson, parent consultant for CRS, came up with the idea for the annual food basket five years ago, when they served 25 families. This year they were able to help the most families ever.

"A lot of families with children with disabilities are on set budgets," Jackson said. "This is to help them out



CRS parent Brian Brooks picks up a box of food at Montgomery CRS.



The Montgomery CRS office provided Thanksgiving food to nearly 100 families at their annual food basket event.

during the holidays."

Other offices around the state have held events for consumers during the holidays. They include, food drives, toy drives, Christmas parties and sponsoring families.

Here are some of the events:

Anniston CRS

Anniston CRS staff supplied three food baskets to families and donated toys for three families for Christmas this year.

Homewood CRS

The Harbert Employees Reaching Out (HERO) Foundation sponsored about 20 of the Homewood CRS consumers for Christmas this year. The foundation provided gifts to families who have unmet needs such as computers, adaptable bicycles, or van lifts.

Huntsville CRS

The Huntsville office held its second annual "Beary Christmas" celebration, where the office collects stuffed bears, toys, and books about bears. The goal was to give a bear to each child who came into the clinic in December.

Mobile CRS

The Mobile CRS office had a

Christmas party for children at the hearing clinic. They also prepared food baskets for three families for Thanksgiving and three for Christmas. Staff members donated the food, and vendors provided turkey or ham for the families.

Montgomery EI

The Montgomery Early Intervention District Coordinating Council hosted a Christmas gathering for consumers. Consumers received toys, played games and enjoyed food.

The Children's Hospital (TCH) CRS

This CRS office, located at The Children's Hospital in Birmingham, conducted a clothing drive for women and children at Jessica's Place in Birmingham for Thanksgiving.

Tuscaloosa/Selma EI

The Tuscaloosa/Selma Early Intervention District Coordinating Council hosted its December meeting with a party for families. Families received a Christmas lunch and baskets of goodies. Children were able to take pictures with Santa and families were able to write letters to their legislators and include a family picture.

State participates in child developmental screening initiative

Research demonstrates that children's healthy development is essential to school readiness, academic success, and overall well-being. However, a recent national survey found that just over half of parents say their child has had a developmental assessment during a pediatric visit.

The Alabama Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) Screening Initiative has been implemented to help. It is a 15-month project to improve statewide policy and pediatric practice related to standardized developmental screening.

Last April, Alabama joined the ranks of 18 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico in the project, supported by the National Academy for Health Care Policy, to 1). identify, improve upon, and implement health care and policy changes purposely designed to improve the detection of developmental delays so that developmental concerns can be identified and children referred for intervention as early as possible, and to 2). improve families' access to services and supports in their communities. More than 40 people statewide have joined five work groups to assist in the work of the project.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency leads this effort, partnering with ADRS, the Department of Public Health (ALL Kids and Bureau of Family Health Services), the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Alabama Partnership for Children, the Alabama Chapter of the American



ABCD initiative provides early child development screenings at pediatric offices.

Academy of Pediatrics, and other organizations, to promote the effective identification of children at risk of a developmental delay during periodic routine well-child visits.

With the initiative, parents can complete a simple questionnaire or screener in the pediatrician's office. The results are reviewed with the parents. This gives parents and caregivers the opportunity to provide valuable information about their child's development and discuss any concerns they may have with their child's doctor. Further referrals for early intervention or specialty clinics, (such as those held by CRS) may be made.

Three pediatric practice sites in the state have been identified to serve as demonstration sites: Drs. Blancher and Stadther in Mobile; Anniston Pediatrics (Drs. Lewis Doggett and Ramarao Vullaganti); and UAB Health Center-Huntsville Division of Pediatrics (Drs. Pippa Abston and Steffane Battle). Based on the lessons learned from

these demonstration sites, the project will be "rolled" out to other practices throughout the state and best practices will be communicated to the pediatric community at large.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that standardized developmental screeners be given at 9, 18, 24 or 30 months, and states that, "The early identification of developmental problems should lead to further developmental and medical evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment, including early developmental intervention."

For further information on this national project and the importance of developmental screening, please go to <http://nashp.org> and follow the link to "Assuring Better Child Health & Dev. (ABCD)" under "Child and Adolescent Health."

Alice Widgeon

*Early Intervention Coordinator
Department of Mental Health*

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Children's Rehabilitation Service
2129 East South Boulevard
Montgomery, AL 36116



'Sibshops' seek memories for silver anniversary

It's true – 'Sibshops' are now 25! Sibshops got their start in October 1982 at the University of Washington's Experimental Educational Unit in Seattle.

Sibshops are for siblings of children with special health and development needs.

Here's a brief history:

In 1978, Don Meyer (now the director of the Sibling Support Project) and Greg Schell (now the director of the Fathers Network) helped pioneer an innovative program for dads of kids with disabilities. The Fathers Program was an effort to provide peer support and information that reflected dads' interests and concerns. Almost immediately, it became apparent that there were other, traditionally unserved family members who could also benefit from opportunities to discuss their unique joys and concerns with peers who would understand: grandparents and, of course, brothers and sisters.

With the help of University of Washington colleagues Patricia Vadasy and Rebecca Fewell, the SEFAM (Supporting Extended Family Members) program was born in late 1981. SEFAM staff further refined the Fathers Program model and developed two new programs: Grandparents Workshop and Sibshops.

In creating Sibshops, Don, Greg, and colleagues certainly did not invent the notion of bringing brothers and sisters together. But what little they had found on sibling groups in clinical journals was not encouraging. As Don recalls, "Most of the articles seemed to describe a setting where a bunch of kids sat in folding chairs and told a therapist how messed up their lives were because they had a sib with Down syndrome." This mindset did not reflect the essential wellness they had seen in the families they served. Nor did the



Siblings of children with special health care needs receive support through the 'Sibshops' program.

activities described in the articles sound like much fun!

SEFAM staff wanted Sibshops to be a program that emphasized wellness and was downright fun to attend – a celebration of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters. Sibshops were – and are – events where school-age sibs can meet their peers; have some fun; talk about the good (and maybe not-so-good) parts of having a sib with others who get it; play some great, goofy games; learn something about their sibs' special needs; and have some more fun!

The very first Sibshop was held in Seattle, Washington on Oct. 23, 1982. There are now more than 200 local Sibshop programs worldwide.

To celebrate Sibshops' silver anniversary, we are inviting all current and former Sibshoppers, parents of Sibshop participants, and current and former Sibshop facilitators from around the world to share a Sibshop memory by writing to us at: sibshopmemories@siblingsupport.org

The memory you share can be as short as a sentence or as long as a few paragraphs. We'll post your Sibshop memory to the Sibling Support Project's website. Photos are equally welcome!!

Along with your memory, please send us the following information (But don't worry! We will not share this information on the website!):

- Your age, if you are younger than 18. We'll need to seek your parent's permission to include your memory on the website;
- Contact information (address, phone, email address).
- Approximate year or years you attended/ran your Sibshop
- The location (e.g., city, state) of the Sibshop you attended.
- The name of your Sibshop facilitator (if you can remember back that far!)

Finally, please let us know if you wish to be referred to in some other way than your first and last name followed by your city and state (e.g., let us know if you prefer "M.S., Wisconsin" to "Mary Smith; Madison, Wisconsin"). Please send your Sibshop memory to: Sibshopmemories@siblingsupport.org

Thanks, everyone!

Don Meyer
Director
Sibling Support Project



EI holds annual statewide conference

Did you know that every year there is a statewide conference for families of young children with developmental delays and special health care needs, and the people who care for them? In fact, Alabama just completed the 23rd consecutive Early Intervention and Preschool Conference, and the wonderful people at CRS have been involved in each and every one of them!

As parents of children with special needs, we recognize that one of the most important things we can do for our own family is to get to know other families who have children with similar needs. The times that we have been able to come together to share experiences and information can be invaluable to us in making the decisions that affect our special child and our entire family. The annual Early Intervention and Preschool Conference offers families with young children this opportunity.

Some of you may have been able to attend one or more of these events and have found time spent with other families, presentations by speakers and exhibits by resource organizations helpful to you. CRS service providers, like nutritionist Claire Stephens and physical therapist Billy Ronilo, shared their wealth of knowledge at this year's conference.

Conference participants also benefited from knowledgeable family participants, like Alfred Reeves, husband of Vonda Reeves, parent consultant from the Dothan office, who presented valuable information to parents of preschool children – parents who are still learning about where to go to get answers to questions about their own child's condition. Many times families receive the most helpful



EI conference attendees take a break from the conference for a group photo.

information about resources from other parents who have older children and have “been there” – parents like Alfred who are willing to share their experiences with young families who are new to the complicated world we sometimes have to manage.

In addition to families, the conference attracts many of the service providers who work with our families: EI program staff; preschool teachers; occupational, speech and physical therapists, nurses and social workers. National and statewide experts speak at the conference, and it is a wonderful opportunity for all of the different kinds of personnel who work with children with special needs to hear new and innovative information at the same time. These presentations always include a family perspective, and the opportunity to hear the family's perspective is consistently evaluated as one of the most successful aspects of

the conference!

Another fun event that is held at each conference is the gathering of families and friends – one evening to celebrate families, who come together and enjoy food, fellowship and prizes! Susan Colburn, your state parent consultant, has helped to coordinate this event each year, and we are grateful for her continued involvement.

More than 725 people attended our 2007 conference! The 24th conference is scheduled for November 2008 in Mobile. Please talk to your own parent consultant, or check out the AEIS website at www.rehab.alabama.gov/ei if you are interested in presenting or attending next year's conference. We hope to see you there!!

Diane Roberts
*Alabama's Early Intervention
System*

Baby Palooza brings awareness of CRS and EI

CRS and EI recently participated in the Baby Palooza Tour at Wiregrass Commons Mall in Dothan. This event was a great opportunity for public awareness. Our booth was displayed along with the other vendors in the common area around center court with convenient access to all consumers.

The event was well attended by new parents, expectant parents as well as grandparents. Families were provided with a host of information from local resources including pediatricians, insurance agencies, therapy services and others.

Various discussions and events were held at the center court stage throughout the day. Local professionals made presentations on topics such as child safety, exercise during pregnancy, and breastfeeding. A question-and-answer session with local pediatricians was also held for the families. Entertainment included a children's fashion show, as well as drawings for prizes. The largest prizes were a Mazda SUV and an "ultimate baby shower."

Our booth arrangement consisted



Stacie Rolf, left, of Dothan EI, and Paula Wiggins, of Dothan CRS, exhibit at Baby Palooza 2007.

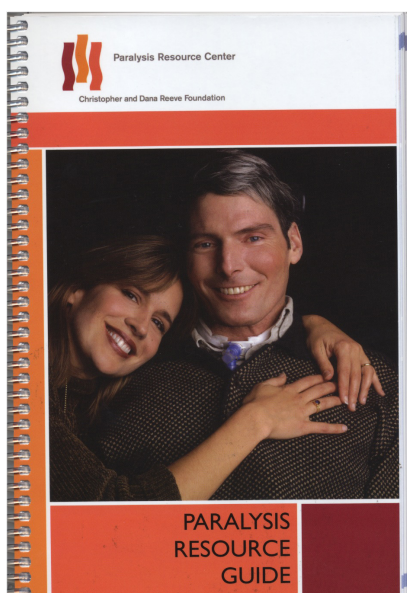
of the small, fold out display board with consumer pictures and a covered table with an array of CRS/EI brochures. Direct contact was made with at least 70 families. A team approach between CRS and EI was used when speaking to the families to briefly describe our services. Each family was provided with general information about each agency, general milestone brochures. Clinic-specific brochures were added upon request. EI provided plastic bags,

which were very helpful and attractive to families as they were gathering information.

I would recommend participating in this event again if possible. Overall, the event proved to be a successful opportunity for public awareness for Early Intervention and Children's Rehabilitation Service.

Jennifer Wesley, AuD
CRS Audiologist

Paralysis resource guide provides valuable health information



I recently had the privilege of attending the National Respite Conference in Huntsville. One exhibit I visited was the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. Their foundation has published a free 310- page "Paralysis Resource Guide."

I found this guide to be very helpful and informative. It tells you about basic conditions such as brain injury, cerebral palsy, post-polio, spina bifida and spinal cord injury. There are chapters on health management and wellness, rehabilitation, how to prepare for travel, how to choose the right caregiver, and how to work the system.

This guide is an easy read. I shared it with families who attended our clinics in Dothan as well as staff. This is a great guide to give to families of people who have recently been diagnosed with paralysis.

If you would like to obtain your own free copy, you can contact Jennifer Legros at the Christopher Reeve Foundation at 1-800-539-7309; or email her at jlegros@ChristopherReeve.org.

Check out their website: www.paralysis.org

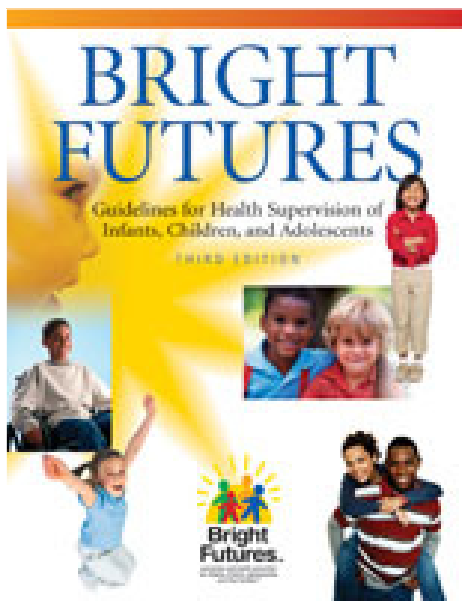
Vonda Reeves
Parent Consultant
Dothan CRS

FAMILY VOICES

Bright Futures 3rd edition available

The 3rd edition of *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents* has just been released. This edition replaces previous editions and provides comprehensive guidelines and anticipatory guidance. Like the previous editions, this update is grounded in the philosophy that effective health promotion and disease prevention require the coordinated effort of health professionals and families.

From health nutrition to behavioral concerns, children benefit most when their parents and health professionals work together. Professionals know about child health care and development; parents have the day-to-day experience that makes them experts on their children. The new edition contains priorities for each of the 31 recommended health visits. There are 10 themes addressed throughout: family support, child development, mental health, healthy weight, healthy nutrition, physical activity, oral health, healthy sexuality, safety and



injury prevention, and community relationships and resources. This edition includes children with special needs throughout and substantive attention is given to culture competence.

For more information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website: <http://brightfutures.aap.org>. Coming in the near future is a pocket guide for professionals, tip sheets for families, and a Bright Futures Tool Kit.

AAP is brimming with resources

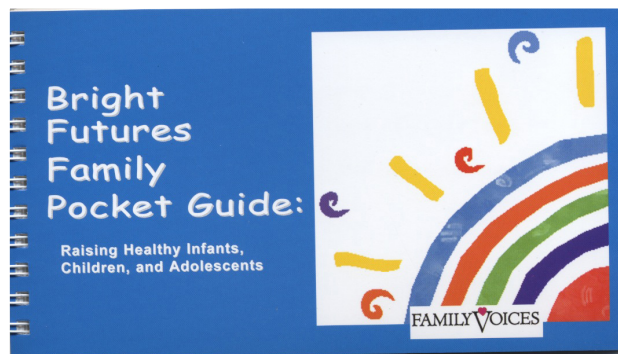
The American Academy of Pediatrics is more than just a professional association for pediatricians. Their mission is to promote optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

They do this by providing educational opportunities and resources for professionals and also by providing parenting and health information for families. For example, if you're curious about the different types of pediatric subspecialties and why your child might need more care than your pediatrician can provide, read the fact sheets posted in the "Parenting Corner" of the website, www.aap.org.

You'll also find information on a wide range of health topics – everything from acne to wheezing – searchable by both health topic and age. And, because the AAP recognizes the importance of parent/provider partnerships, there's a section about working with your pediatrician. The AAP is also home to Bright Futures.

See www.brightfutures.aap.org for resources, contacts, and for information, including news about the new Bright Futures Guidelines.

The American Academy of Pediatrics
141 Northwest Point Boulevard
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098
Web: www.aap.org



For copies of the
Bright Futures Family
Pocket Guide, ask
your care coordinator
or visit your local
CRS office.

For information about Family Voices, please contact the Alabama state coordinators, Susan Colburn (334) 613-2884, susan.colburn@rehab.alabama.gov or Jerry Oveson (251) 438-1609, oveson@bellsouth.net.

State public health conducts newborn screening test

Parents will be glad to know every baby born in one of Alabama's 58 birthing hospitals receives a newborn screening test. A few drops of blood is taken from your baby's heel and analyzed to check for treatable metabolic diseases, (such as phenylketonuria (PKU), endocrine disorders (such as congenital hypothyroidism) and sickle cell disease.

Expanded newborn screens can detect even more diseases. These disorders are difficult or impossible to detect just by looking at your newborn baby. Parents can pass along the gene of a certain disorder without

knowing that they are carriers. Without treatment, these disorders can lead to slow growth, severe illness, brain damage, or possibly death.

The majority of infants pass the screening tests with flying colors. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "4.1 million newborns are screened annually for congenital disorders in the United States. Of these, 4,000 infants are diagnosed as having a condition."

Cindy Ashley, RN, BC NBS
Follow-up Coordinator
1-800-545-1098



Babies born in Alabama's birthing hospitals receive a newborn screening test.

Funderful Times

On a recent Sunday, my family and I visited a small town in Winston County where we once lived. That morning as we attended worship at the church we had attended, I saw a very large worship banner I had made. Imagine my excitement to see this banner I had sewn, not only still together, but hanging just as beautifully. I walked over to touch it. My husband announced with glee, "You made that!"

It was about that time that my 13-year-old Ethan shouted, "But you can't sew!" His brother clamped his hand over Ethan's mouth and reminded him I once made all their clothes and even quilted. It dawned on me that Ethan had never seen me sew. When he was born, Ethan got the hand-me-downs from his brothers who are six and eight years older than him. The smocked jumpers, bishop collars, bright-colored shorts, and the fun costumes were all made and ready for Ethan. He never knew I was a seamstress.

It was then I began to think about all the creative attempts I have made throughout the years that my family might have never known. What about

jobs that I have held and family my children have never met? How can I bring the past into the present so that they will know and remember? Scrapbooking and cardmaking has been a wonderful hobby for me during the past several years. However, I can bake, crochet, quilt, sew, make baskets, smock, embroider, garden and have just learned to knit. Wonderful stories began pouring out of me about each of these and some I didn't bother to list.

Times are busy, but what fun you can have from showing your children the things you have made over the years. Like the time I was cutting off corn and kept losing ears from my pan only to find the cat had been stealing them and eating the remaining corn on the ear. "What?" you say. "How old are you?" Then there was the time a family member wasn't able to see after their garden and asked us to help in exchange for some canned tomatoes. That summer we had so many Roma tomatoes, small egg shaped, that our single carport couldn't hold all the containers they were in. I made ketchup, spaghetti sauce, and stewed tomatoes that lasted for several years

and made wonderful gifts.

Last summer, our son Joel got very sick. While spending six months at various medical appointments, I felt that I needed something mindless to do. I bought 2-ounce skins of cotton yarn and made not one, but 73 dishcloths. Realizing nobody needed this many, I began giving them away. Imagine the time I left the ball of yarn in the waiting room at Children's Hospital's clinic pod and it completely unrolled by the time Joel and I got to the exam room.

Hobbies can bring wonderful conversation to the table and a hearty laugh. What did you do as a child? Did your grandmother teach you how to needlepoint? Did Grandpa show you how to whittle? Although many of my generation never knew what it meant to pick cotton, they do have wonderful memories that were shared with an adult who taught them something worth sharing even today. Write your stories, share them with your family, and smile. Welcome the stories of the elders and listen carefully. Funderful times is wonderful when shared with another person.

Rita Cobbs
Parent Consultant, Huntsville



Let's YAC About It

My Voice

“My Voice” is a model project whose mission is to encourage the development of self-determination in youth and young adults with disabilities.

During the 2007-2008 school year, “My Voice” will bring together carefully selected students, teachers, and parents from Jefferson County Schools and Opelika City Schools to participate in interactive learning experiences. These trainings will help the students discover the power and possibilities of self-determination and give them a chance to practice

these skills before their Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

In addition, students who have undergone “My Voice” training will be encouraged to participate in two statewide groups that have ties to national disability leadership and advocacy organizations: the Alabama Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) for high school youth with leadership potential, and Young Adults in Transition (YAIT), for young people who have made the transition to higher education and/or employment.

This project was chosen for funding

by the Secondary Transition State Capacity Building Initiative (STSCBI). Partners of the STSCBI include the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education (NASDSE), and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). Design and implementation of the “My Voice” project is a collaborative effort among the Alabama State Department of Education (SDE), the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), and the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI) at Auburn University.

WINTER



M G D H S C A R F F O E I E W
D K S E D F M I T T E N S C D
I X T U C D R B A W D L Z U U
O E S P N E H O L I D A Y S U
U R I F P G M T S N O W M A N
P C O L D P X B Z T A H K U B
E B A Q U M O G E E B O L Y V
H C Q U J O N E Q R I I S S F
E E Y K T C K X Z V H P T Q X
K Q X S Y Y J L F S O E U E I
F O N Y G E M P L M K N A Y Q
Y O C N T Y N E N C M I M A M
W U H A S M D B A U C W I U Z
C Y G D B S Z J D J U L Q N O
J N Y A E B L Q P A D E C H G



CRS Parent Connection

Children's Rehabilitation Service
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
2129 East South Blvd.
Montgomery, AL 36116

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What's Ahead

- Jan. 17, 2008** *Wrightslaw Workshop*; First Baptist Church; Montgomery; Contact: Anna Bloom at anna_asa@bellsouth.net or (205) 951-1364
- Feb. 11-12, 2008** *Alabama Ear Institute's "Parental Guidance: Establishing Parents as Partners;"* Homewood Public Library; Homewood; Contact: Nancy Wilson, (205) 879-4234
- Feb. 25, 2008** *Alabama State of the State in TBI Annual Conference*; Cahaba Grand Conference Center; Birmingham; for more information, visit www.ahif.org/conference.htm or (205) 823-3818
- Feb. 28-29, 2008** *7th Annual Alabama Autism Conference*; Bryant Conference Center; Tuscaloosa; Contact: Amanda Al-Betar at aalbetar@ccs.ua.edu or (205) 348-9966
- March 3-7, 2008** *9th Annual National Fatherhood & Families Conference "Dads Make a Difference;"* Sheraton Crescent; Phoenix, Ariz.; for more information, visit www.azffc.org
- April 30 - May 2, 2008** *Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Conference*; Bryant Conference Center; Tuscaloosa; Contact: Geri Stone at (205) 348-6225 or Penny Williamson at (205) 348-3014
- Local PAC Meetings:** *Check your local CRS office* for dates and times of meetings in your area.